

Abstract

The present invention provides methods and compositions for treating or preventing allergic responses, particularly anaphylactic allergic responses, in subjects who are allergic to allergens or susceptible to allergies. Methods of the present invention utilize administration of microorganisms to subjects, where the microorganisms produce allergens and protect the subjects from exposure to the allergens until phagocytosed by antigen-presenting cells. Particularly preferred microorganisms are gram-negative bacteria, gram-positive bacteria, and yeast. Particularly preferred allergens are proteins found in foods, venoms, drugs and latex that elicit allergic reactions and anaphylactic allergic reactions in individuals who are allergic to the proteins or are susceptible to allergies to the proteins. The proteins may also be modified to reduce the ability of the proteins to bind and crosslink IgE antibodies and thereby reduce the risk of eliciting anaphylaxis without affecting T-cell mediated Th1-type immunity.